



"Whatta' ya' mean it isn't going to hurt?" says Sparky to Veterinarian Bob Erickson, and Kay Mayoh isn't very happy about what's about to happen to her little friend. But she knows the rabies shot is for Sparky's own good. Dr. Erickson administered 60 rabies inoculations to Wasatch County dogs Saturday afternoon at the Heber City shed.

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So we invest our hard-earned, scarce tax money in a truck that's designed only to transport dogs. We pay a full-time police officer's wages to round them up, take them to the pound that we have paid for and must pay to maintain, keep them warm and well-fed, then kill them if nobody wants them, which also is a rather costly process.

But for every wandering dog that is hauled off the streets, another is born and turned loose to take its place. The problem is perpetual.

This is foolishness. It would be hard to come up with an accurate figure on how much public money is actually spent on controlling dogs in this county. But there's no question that for the same price we could have one more patrol car and one more police officer, if not two. Or we could put that money into road repairs, parks improvements, library books.

A few weeks ago a well-trained, experienced law enforcement officer, weary of chasing loose dogs around the county, leaned back in his chair and asked, "What should we do about all these stray dogs?" as though we knew some secret we'd been keeping from him.

In our opinion, he was asking the wrong question. We don't spend money to train him and his fellow deputies, and pay their wages so they can chase dogs. But when the public doesn't do what it should, government ends up taking over the responsibility, and we have only ourselves to blame when the money we invest to get a good police force ends up wasted on dog control.

The solutions are simple and they are the dog owners' responsibilities: a) spay or neuter dogs to keep the population down, and b) control them.

Please, dog owners, be responsible for your canine companions. They damage our property. They do terrible things to helpless sheep. Maybe you didn't realize before how the rest of us feel about your beloved pets. But now you do.

And if anybody has an answer to the deputy's question, call the sheriff's office with it. We do appreciate our officers' efforts to control dogs for the owners that won't. But a few yards of chain or rope would be a lot cheaper.